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THE LATEST PHASE  
OF THE  
CONGO QUESTION

IMPORTANT REFORMS DECREED AND PUT INTO  
OPERATION—LARGE MAJORITY OF MISSION-  
ARIES UPHOLD CONGO GOVERNMENT—  
PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN BELGIUM  
APPROVES KING LEOPOLD'S  
AFRICAN POLICY.

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STORIES OF "ATROCITIES" DENIED BY PROMINENT  
MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE SPENT YEARS  
IN THE CONGO FREE STATE.

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# The Latest Phase of the Congo Question

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## IMPORTANT REFORMS DECREED AND PUT INTO OPERATION.

The Congo question has entered upon a new phase. The conditions prevailing in the Free State have been investigated by a commission whose honesty and integrity have been acknowledged even by the bitterest enemies of the Congo Government.

The opinion of the Commissioners was :

1. That the charges against the Congo Administration had been greatly exaggerated.

2. That in certain instances the Congo Government had been guilty of negligence, but that, taking it all in all, the administration compared favorably with the government of the colonies of other powers in Africa.

3. That a number of administrative reforms should be put in operation as soon as possible—especially that the labor-tax should be more strictly supervised and equitably levied and that the use of “capitas” (armed native overseers) should be prohibited to concessionary companies. These were the two defects in the Congo Administration which had given rise to most of the criticisms against the Government.

On the 3rd of June, 1906, King Leopold issued twenty-five Decrees carrying out the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

These Decrees cover all the points on which the Administration has been criticized. They provide, among other things, for the extension of the judicial system, for additional grants of land to natives; above all they regulate the labor-tax and abolish the use of capitas or armed native sentries.

It is a large undertaking to put these reforms into operation throughout the whole territory of the Congo, which occupies an area about one-third the size of the United States. Nevertheless the work has been pushed forward rapidly. Instructions in

regard to disarming the native sentries were issued by the Vice-Governor-General on August 3rd. The instructions in regard to the labor-tax appeared under date of September 8th. Hereafter the State cannot compel the natives to work for any commercial company. "Henceforth," say the instructions, "the companies shall have recourse exclusively to voluntary and paid labor for the working of their property or concessions."

There can be no doubt that the reforms will be carried out thoroughly and in good faith. In spite of the calumnies put about by the King's enemies, no one can point to a single concrete instance where King Leopold has failed to carry out a promise. Moreover it is clearly to the commercial and political, as well as humanitarian, interests of the King and his Administration to effect reforms which will make the Government run smoother, and which will make the natives happy and industrious rather than discontented and rebellious.

The reforms are of a nature to satisfy the native, to satisfy the Government, and, in fact, to satisfy everybody except the professional reformers and the well-meaning but misguided members of religious and philanthropic societies who blindly follow these professional guides without examining the matter for themselves.

The professional reformers who continue their campaign against the Congo are fighting a dead issue. The reforms they asked for have been granted. If they really want reforms they now have them. If they want something more they are not acting in good faith, but are seeking an excuse to destroy the State like the wolf in the fable who complained that the lamb had muddled his drinking-pool.

#### THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE CONGO.

The accusations against the Congo are chiefly based upon four kinds of evidence:

- I. Stories, partly true and partly false, of a few isolated incidents which occurred many years ago during the period when all the energies of King Leopold's Government were engaged in putting down the Arab slave-raids, and in the days when the State was just beginning to set its hand to the task of administering this immense territory in Darkest Africa.

2. Endless exaggerations and multiplications of those stories, reminding one of Falstaff's eleven men in buckram suits grown out of two.

3. Fanciful stories told by natives and accepted by missionaries as gospel truth, without the slightest attempt at verification.

4. Flat libels.

As an example of old stories, galvanized and still doing duty as current events may be cited some statements made by the Secretary of the Boston Congo Reform Association in a magazine just published (December, 1906). He relates as though it were the newest piece of gossip an incident described by Mr. Sjoblom. That incident was first related by Mr. Sjoblom nine years ago, but it is now served up as something fresh and no date given to it. It may or may not be a true story, but its resurrection suggests that there is a scarcity of fresh "atrocities" in stock.

In the same article the Secretary of the Congo Reform Association of Boston affirms that "cannibalism exists in spite of the dictum of the Inquiry Commission," and then proceeds to prove the prevalence of cannibalism in the present year of grace by narrating without date an incident that occurred more than ten years ago.

False stories are often accepted by simple-minded and zealous clergymen and handed out again with their endorsement and with the added authority of their names and priestly office. As an example may be cited the story circulated extensively this summer on the authority of the Rev. Dr. R. H. Nassau. In June, 1906, a New York paper published the story of an alleged "atrocitiy." The article appeared over the signature of the Rev. Dr. Nassau who seemed to relate the incident as something within his personal knowledge. The paper, furthermore, stated that Dr. Nassau had lived 45 years in the Congo Free State. The Consul-General of the Congo State investigated the case, and finally obtained from Dr. Nassau a written acknowledgment that he had never been in the Congo Free State, that he had no personal knowledge of the incident related so vividly, that it was simply a story he had read in a book—a book that had been condemned as a libel more than two years ago by an English Court.

The recklessness of certain missionaries in making accusations is also shown in the case of the Rev. Mr. Stannard, an



English missionary, who was in June of this year found guilty of libel against an officer in the Congo Service.

One of the most daring attempts to damage the Congo Free State by trumped-up charges was made by Guy Burrows with his book "The Curse of Central Africa." The book related horrors which made a deep impression. It was widely used as a campaign document against the Congo and stories from it are found in circulation to this day in spite of the fact that in 1904 the book was condemned as a libel by the Court of King's Bench in London. It was, moreover, shown at the trial that an effort had been made to coerce the Congo Government into buying the manuscript before publication, but the Government refused to yield to what they considered an attempt to "blackmail."

#### THE LARGE MAJORITY OF MISSIONARIES IN THE CONGO IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The enemies of the Congo claim that their views are backed by the great body of missionaries in the Congo. This claim is absolutely false.

There are over 500 missionaries out there, Protestant and Catholic. Out of this number 52 have signed an "Appeal" against the Administration—in other words, about one missionary in ten is against the Government.

Of these 52 signers sixteen are wives of missionaries and are supposed to echo the opinions of their husbands. Thirty-five of the signers have mission stations in the district near the coast and, consequently, do not speak with any authority in passing judgment on events which were alleged to have happened in the interior—apparently they relied on stories told them by others. One of the signers has his missionary station situated in Portuguese Africa, and another signer, Rev. Mr. Hensey, arrived in the Congo for the first time on December 23, 1905 and nineteen days later signed the appeal condemning the administration of a country one-third the size of the United States.

The opinion of 52 missionaries, no matter how hastily formed, should be treated with proper consideration, but the opinion of the remaining 450 is evidently of much more weight, and in the documents collected in this pamphlet will be found extracts from letters which go to show that the large majority of

Congo missionaries uphold King Leopold's rule in Africa and praise him for the good work he has accomplished.

Among other documents will be found a letter from the principals of all the Catholic Orders in the Congo, expressing the sentiments of their 384 missionaries in repelling the attacks which have been directed against the Government.

There will also be found at the end of this pamphlet expressions of opinion from the British Baptist Missionary Society; Dr. Samuel P. Verner, a Presbyterian; Rev. W. Millman, of the Baptist Missionary Society; Rev. Mr. Clarke, and Rev. William George, English missionaries; Monsignor Van Ronslé, Apostolic Vicar in the Congo Free State; Monsignor Roelens, Apostolic Vicar of the Upper Congo; Monsignor Augouard, Father Maguire, Father Colle, Father Beyen of the Order of Premontr , and other missionaries who have had long experience in the Congo. It is true that most of these witnesses for the Congo are Catholics, but it must be remembered that the large majority of missionaries out there are of that church. No Christian, of whatever creed he be, can, for a moment, think that this noble army of nearly 400 Catholic missionaries who are laying down their lives for the salvation of Africa, would condone "atrocities" or uphold and defend a corrupt administration.

#### SENTIMENT IN BELGIUM SUPPORTS THE KING'S POLICY.

The enemies of the Congo, ignoring the opinions of some 400 missionaries who approve the Government, brazenly attempt to pass off the views of 52 as the unanimous missionary sentiment in the Congo. In the same way they try to palm off the opinions of a few socialists and malcontents as the sentiment of the Belgian Parliament and of the Belgian people. The bluff may go with some people (particularly when they label a "Christian-Democrat" as "Catholic and Conservative" or disguise a socialist as a "Liberal"), but any one who is at all familiar with Belgium is aware that Belgian public opinion upholds and approves King Leopold's administration of the Congo. Go where you will in Belgium and you will find that the great majority of the Belgian people, from the most distinguished statesmen down to the small shop-keeper stand solidly by the King in his colonial enterprise and speak with both admiration and gratitude of the great work

he has accomplished for Belgium and for civilization in the Congo.

In the succeeding pages will be found extracts giving the sentiments of such distinguished members of the Belgian Parliament as Count de Smet de Naeyer, Monsieur Woeste, Senator Wiener, and Monsieur Henry Carton de Wiart.

#### PROFITS DO NOT GO INTO KING'S POCKETS.

Some of the "proofs" against the Congo are so ridiculous that they can hardly be considered seriously. For example the Secretary of the Boston Congo Reform Association in a recent publication seriously asserts that as the exports from the Congo exceed the imports by some \$6,000,000 a year, it follows that King Leopold, "according to his own figures is looting the country to the extent of about six million dollars a year." It sounds rather like an argument from "Alice in Wonderland." One could as well say that because the exports of India exceed the imports by \$100,000,000 a year, England is looting India to the extent of \$100,000,000, or that she is robbing the Transvaal of fifteen million dollars annually and the Malay States of a like amount. The professional reformers of the Congo fear that somebody is making money out of Central Africa besides themselves—hence they call it "loot" and say it goes into the King's pocket. As usual, they are wrong on both points. There is no "loot" in the matter and the revenues from the State do not go into the King's pocket. There is no mystery about the Congo finances. The revenue from concessions goes to the stockholders of the companies. The State receives in proportion to the number of shares it holds. This money figures in the public budget and is used for the expenses of the Government. Profits from lands managed by the State are also put into the public budget of the State and likewise go into the treasury of the State. No public account is made of the revenue from the Crown Lands, but the money does not go into the King's pockets. It might reasonably be expected that the revenue from the Crown Lands should go to the Crown, but the King has voluntarily renounced personal participation in this revenue and has with great generosity turned the whole amount of income from the Crown Lands into a fund for public improvements in the Congo and in Belgium.



This self-denial on the part of the King does not prevent his enemies from making out fanciful balance-sheets for him and crediting his imaginary account with fabulous amounts. A recent anti-Congo writer goes so far as to say that the King makes fourteen million dollars a year out of the Congo which looks like the statement of a frenzied financier as the whole annual output from the Congo is only about \$10,000,000.

King Leopold gave millions of francs out of his own pocket to support the Congo in its early days. It was his munificence that made the existence of the State possible. It was his initiative and generosity that opened up the country and enabled the missionaries to carry the Cross to the heart of Africa. He has watched over the Congo and guarded it and has prepared it as a rich legacy for Belgium. The Congo is the work of King Leopold's hands and, as His Majesty recently said, "There can be no more legitimate and respectable right than the right of the author to his own work,—the fruit of his labor.

"The Powers assisted at the birth of the new State with benevolence, but not a single one of them was asked to participate in my efforts; not one of them therefore possesses a right of intervention in the Congo, which nothing could justify . . . . My rights in the Congo are absolute; they are the results of my labor and expense."

With this clear announcement of the international rights of the Congo Free State should be compared the opinion of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron de Favereau:

"It would be contrary to all principles of international law that a Government should interfere in the internal administration of a sovereign State."

Also with Mr. Root's equally explicit opinion:

"The Congo State absolutely denies any right on their (*i. e.*, the Powers) part to intervene in its affairs, and none of the other signatory Powers appear to controvert that denial. However this may be, it is certain that the United States has no treaty right of intervention. We could not rightfully summon or participate in any international conference looking to intervention, adjudication or enforcement of a general accord by other African Powers against the Congo State."

# TESTIMONY OF

## Missionaries in the Congo Free State.

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STATEMENT SIGNED BY  
THE PRINCIPALS OF THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES  
IN THE CONGO FREE STATE.

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(It should be noted that the Catholic Orders constitute a majority of the Christian Missionaries in the Congo Free State. They have 384 Missionaries and Sisters and 72,000 communicants and catechumens. They have 88 Mission Posts scattered throughout the whole country, 113 churches and chapels, 528 farm chapels and over 500 schools.)

The following extract is from a letter addressed by the Principals of the Orders to the *Catholic Herald*, and dated December 29, 1904:

"The undersigned, principals of the Catholic missionaries of both sexes in the Congo Free State, hold it a duty to express to you their respectful and keen gratitude for the energetic way in which your newspaper has defended them, and for the open letter in which you have replied to the accusations leveled at them by Mr. Morel.

"Up to this date we have left to others the care of answering the unjustifiable charges made of late against the Free State. But as Mr. Morel now accuses the Catholic missionaries of being silent, either by order or out of self-interest, we owe it to our honor to give his allegations a public and completely unanimous denial.

"Our Catholic missionaries have never gainsaid that in Congo-land—as in all new colonies—cruelties have been practised in isolated instances. They have not had to denounce such cruelties, however, because—to the knowledge of all—the Government of the

Free State has always been prompt to redress abuses, in order to prevent their recurrence."

(Signed.)

AD. VAN HECKE,

Superior General of the Scheut Fathers, established in the Apostolic Vicariate of the Congo Free State and in the Apostolic Prefecture of the Upper-Kasai.

JOS. STYBOL,

Provincial Superior of the Redemptorist Fathers, established in the Congo Free State.

AD. DECKERS,

Abbot of Tongerlo, Superior of the Canons of the Order of Premontre, established in the Apostolic Prefecture of the Uele.

JOS. DE VOS, S. J.,

Provincial Superior of the Jesuit Fathers, established in the Apostolic Prefecture of the Kwango.

FATHER BELAUE,

Superior of the White Fathers of Africa, residing in Antwerp.

FERD. BROECHOVEN,

Abbot of the Trappist Fathers, established in the Equator District of the Congo Free State.

NORBERT AERTS,

Procurator of the Trappist missionaries in the Congo Free State.

S. DEHON,

Superior General of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, established in the Prefecture of the Falls.

V. JEANROY,

Procurator of the Falls Mission.

ADDRESS OF  
THE BRITISH BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF  
LONDON,  
TO HIS MAJESTY,  
KING LEOPOLD II.

January, 1903.

"The Committee of the British Baptist Missionary Society of London desire most respectfully to address Your Majesty, as Sovereign of the Congo Free State, and to express their grateful acknowledgments for Your Majesty's gracious and helpful sympathy with all wisely-considered efforts put forth for the enlightenment and uplifting of Your Majesty's native subjects living within the territories of the Congo Free State.

"In prosecution of these labors, the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society desire gratefully to acknowledge the many signal and helpful proofs they have received of Your Gracious Majesty's approval and support; and very specially at this juncture they are anxious to express to Your Majesty their respectful appreciation of the great boon granted 'to all religious, scientific and charitable institutions,' by the reduction of direct and personal taxes by 50 per cent., from, on and after the first day of July last, as proclaimed by Your Majesty's command, in the May and June issues of the *Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Independant du Congo*, which the Committee regards as a further and significant proof of Your Majesty's desire to promote the truest welfare of Your Majesty's Congo subjects, and to help forward all institutions calculated to produce enduring and beneficial results."

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LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR VAN RONSLÉ.

APOSTOLIC-VICAR IN THE CONGO FREE STATE.

"There is very little time to write before the departure of the mail. I will not, however, delay in telling you the painful impression produced upon us by the attempts that are being made to destroy or injure a work which is one of the glories of our King and country.

"To those of our fellow-countrymen who interrogate you, and who wish to know what we think of the attacks of which the State is the object, you can reply that in our opinion they are unjustified.

"The State condemns any abuses that come under its knowledge. The law is well organized, extends like a network over all the State territory, and is carried out in some degree independently of the



administration. I have known a great many magistrates, who have formed part of it, honorable men, and who had their responsibilities very much at heart, performing their duty in an independent and conscientious manner. How, then, is it possible to affirm that atrocities are erected into a system patronized by the State?

"I make it my duty in the present circumstances, to pay the Government a tribute of admiration and gratitude. Of admiration, in presence of the vast and fine organization that it has succeeded in establishing here after such a few years, and which astonishes even those who wish to injure it; of gratitude for the benevolent protection and efficacious support which it has given to our missions.

"That is briefly what I had in my heart to tell you, and what I beg you to communicate to those who might be in doubt as to our views in the present circumstances."—(*Letter dated Leopoldville, Congo Free State, July 28, 1903.*)

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#### DR. SAMUEL PHILLIPS VERNER

(Sometime connected with the missions of the Southern Presbyterian Church, of America, in the Congo.)

#### IN REGARD TO THE TROUBLES BETWEEN CERTAIN BRITISH MISSIONARIES AND THE CONGO GOVERNMENT.

"The main point about these troubles is the fact that they do not arise from any antagonistic policy between the Governments represented, or from any mischievous attitude on the part of the theoretical program of the Government. They come principally from the weaknesses and mistakes of individuals on the field, from the alienation in nationality and language between the contiguous settlers, and from the petty, and often pusillanimous quarrels and officiousness, for which both parties are to blame. On the whole sensible men may, and do, live together in peace and soberness, and wrongs are righted, grievances redressed and just privileges accorded, when the proper means are used, and the proper diplomatic usages observed. Certain it is, that the general effect of the Government has been progressive and beneficial. There are some flagrant abuses, but these are being corrected as rapidly as the conditions permit, and it is a fact that many abuses have been corrected when timely attention has been called to them."—(*From "Pioneering in Central Africa" by S. P. Verner, Richmond Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903.*)

## REV. W. MILLMAN, A BAPTIST MISSIONARY.

"It is a pleasure and an honor to be able to say that in this part of the Province Orientale, that is, in the country lying between Isanghi and Stanleyville, with which we are and have been for eight years very intimately acquainted, we have never seen or known any single case of grave maladministration or cruelty.

"Your Excellency, it is a joy to us, and you will pardon us if we express the wish that a like joy may soon be the lot of every Congolese, native and white, to testify to the ability, enlightenment, and humanity of the officers who have occupied the highest position in this province from the early days of Mr. Malfeyts residence here until the present time of Mr. de Muelemeester's term of office."—(*Letter dated Yakusu, December 28, 1905.*)

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## REV. JOHN ALEXANDER CLARKE AND REV. WILLIAM GEORGE.

Rev. John Alexander Clarke and Rev. William George, both English Protestant Missionaries of the Garenganze Mission, contradict the statements of the Rev. Dugald Campbell:

"With reference to the grave charges brought against the Congo Government by the Rev. Dugald Campbell, of NE. Rhodesia, in your *Weekly Edition Supplement* of August 26, 1904—viz. (1) 'that it tolerates, profits by, and makes no effort to suppress the slave traffic; (2) the slavers are well supplied with guns, rifles, and ammunition'—we, as missionaries who have lived in Katanga district for some years, desire to say that the first statement is absolutely incorrect and altogether misrepresents the Government. Personally, we know of vigorous measures having been taken to suppress this horrid traffic carried on by Western traders, the Bambundu; even as recently as the spring of this year expeditions have passed our door for this very purpose. The second statement is entirely misleading, the guns, rifles, and ammunition are brought in from the West Coast, and are not supplied by the Congo authorities. While other statements in Mr. Campbell's letter require some modification, others, again, are not true of the present régime."—(*Letter to "The Times," dated Koni Hill, Congo, November 21, 1904.*)

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## MONSIGNOR VAN RONSLÉ.

A later letter from Mgr. Van Ronslé, Apostolic-Vicar of the Lower Congo, who has had fifteen years' experience in the Congo and has never seen an act of cruelty there:

"During the period of fifteen years that I have been in the Congo, never, neither myself nor, as far as I know, anybody amongst my missionaries has been an eye-witness to any act of cruelty, nor has even seen the effects of such an act.

"The missionary Fathers and myself have heard sometimes complaints of reprehensible acts, but in most cases the stories which were told to us left room for much doubt.

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"I do not pretend that we find everything perfect in every way, but only a Colonial Government which is above all reproach would have the right to cast stones at the Congo Free State."—(*Letter dated Leopoldville, Congo Free State, December 22, 1904.*)

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### MONSIGNOR ROELENS, APOSTOLIC-VICAR OF THE UPPER CONGO.

Monsignor Roelens, Apostolic-Vicar of the Upper Congo, has spent twelve years in the Congo Free State, and "does not know a single case of inhuman treatment inflicted by a white man on a negro":

"It is on behalf of true justice and of real humanity that we, Belgian Missionaries, make bold to protest against the attacks leveled at His Majesty our King and against our fellow-countrymen whom we believe attacked without any serious foundation.

"I say we 'believe without foundation.' We are positive about it. In regard to a portion of the Congo known to us from having visited it in detail, and in which we have been living for many years, and from what we have learned and are learning every day, we are satisfied that the same applies to the Congo throughout.

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"The officers who have succeeded one another here in the Government of this portion of the Congo have proved themselves equal to their humanitarian task. They have always exercised the strictest control over their inferiors. I am able to assert as absolute truth that during the twelve years I have spent out here, and though I have always been acquainted with all that was going on in the State stations and their vicinity, not a single case of inhuman treatment inflicted by a white man on any negro has ever come to my knowledge.

"I have roamed all over the part of the Congo State extending from the Tanganyika to Stanleyville; I have resided for days and days in various stations of the State; I have made a detailed inspection of the shores of the lake, a good part of Urua and Manyema;



I have conversed freely with the natives who have laid open all their grievances to me. The only misdoings which they complained of were those committed by the so-called Wangwanas (civilized), former confederates or followers of the Arabs, whose principles they put into practice. In spite of active supervision and of the closest watch, the State has so far not succeeded in preventing all the outrages which they are in the habit of perpetrating. Nowhere have I ever heard a charge of inhumanity advanced against an officer of the State. Everywhere I have found peace, security, plentifulness and joy. I have not seen a single trace anywhere of these so-called inhuman oppression and intolerable yoke.”—(*Letter dated Brandoinville, Congo, March 15, 1904.*)

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REV. MR. AVE, AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY.

Rev. Mr. Ave, an American missionary, as reported by Colonel James J. Harrison in *London Times*, June 10, 1904:

“Since writing the above I see in today’s *Morning Post* quotations from some English trader in Matadi. He says: ‘From all I hear things up country are worse than ever. In the Mayumbe country, behind Boma even, the State has begun collecting rubber by force from the natives.’

“As I happened to travel home on the same boat as Mr. Ave, an American missionary, who has for some years been in charge of this Mayumbe district, his statements to me may be of interest. Mr. Ave said: ‘All these reports were untrue; that the district was governed by an officer who was most kind and considerate in all his dealings with the natives; that he had carefully readjusted the taxation so as to fall as fairly as possible with regard to villages and population of same; and that he was universally respected by all the natives as a kind and just man.’”

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REV. FATHER COLLE.

Letter from Rev. Father Colle to *The Catholic Herald*, giving results of six years’ experience in the eastern part of the Congo Free State:

“February 5th, 1905.

“Sir: I hasten to reply to your esteemed letter of the 28th of October, 1904, in which you do me the honor to consult me concerning the ‘atrocities’ attributed to the Congo Administration. I reply then quite candidly and without reticence, nor any ‘arriere pensee’ whatever.



"After nearly six years' residence in the Congo, of which four were spent in the neighborhood of the agents of the Comité Spécial of the Katanga, I have never found the least act which merits in the smallest degree the epithet 'atrocities.' On the contrary, it has seemed to me many times that a little more firmness would have been better amongst the savage and intractable people which surrounds us.

"May my feeble offering help to strengthen information more authorized, and aid however little the work of truth and justice that you have undertaken.

"(Signed.)

PIERRE COLLE,  
"Catholic Missionary in Urua."

#### FATHER MAGUIRE, A MISSION ON THE UPPER CONGO.

Father Maguire, a mission on the Upper Congo :

"Before concluding, I would just mention that, though I have traveled by boat and on foot from Boma to Amadi and higher up to Surunga, calling at all the State stations; though I have visited many establishments, both Catholic and non-Catholic, as well as some stations of independent companies; though I have passed nights and days in my tent in the forest and in villages of the natives; though I have had ample opportunities of seeing much in my journeys as to how the natives are treated, I have never seen or heard of any of the atrocities with which the agents of the Free State are charged. On the contrary, one cannot but admire the wonderful progress that has been made in so short a time, the commendable way in which the natives are treated, the little work that is exacted of them, and the manner in which they are punctually paid for every service rendered or work done. The little work which is occasionally exacted of them by way of tax in portage or otherwise is as nothing when compared with the immense benefits conferred upon them by the State. In fact the methods of the Belgian officers drew a highly complimentary eulogium from the Sirdar during his recent visit to the Enclave of Lado—methods which, he stated, might be followed with advantage by our English officers: *Messieurs, nous avons d'excellentes leçons devant nos yeux*, said he, 'Gentlemen, these are excellent object-lessons for us.'"—*(Letter in "Manchester Guardian," March 31, 1904.)*

## MONSIGNOR AUGOUARD.

M<sup>gr</sup>. Augouard, Bishop of the French Upper Congo, on conditions prevailing in the Congo Free State:

"Dear Sir: In reply to your letter of the 28th of October, last, I hasten to send you the information you have asked in regard to the atrocities of which the Congo Free State is accused.

"I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to protest against these accusations, and I shall lay before you the truth of the matter in all sincerity.

"I have been in the Congo region for 27 years. I was present at the birth of the Congo Free State and have witnessed its rapid development. Consequently I am better qualified than anyone else to give you information acquired by long experience.

"The majority of the accusations made against the Free State are only repetitions of accusations made ten or fifteen years ago; but no new facts have been found in support of these charges. Among the accusations formerly made, some were well founded, and, at the period to which I refer, I myself protested against certain abuses and demanded their repression. But in what colony do you not find some abuses of authority and some faults committed by the officials? French, Germans, Portuguese and Belgians have more or less abused their power at times, and the English themselves have not always been very tender in their dealings with the natives of Africa. Why should these latter now reproach the Belgians for doing those things which they themselves have done in their own colonies?

"But I affirm that the majority of the stories which have been recently put in circulation again are either false or considerably exaggerated.

"Undoubtedly perfection does not exist in the Congo Free State any more than it exists in the neighboring colonies. But I am glad to say that the Free State endeavors to put down abuses and that, especially during the past ten years, the judicial officers have devoted special attention to the prosecution of agents guilty of cruelty towards the natives.

"Whenever I have had the honor of being received in audience by King Leopold II, His Majesty has asked me to tell him frankly and freely of any abuses which might have come to my knowledge, promising me to apply a prompt remedy.

"If the Free State has occasionally employed severe measures to subdue savage and cannibal tribes, it must be admitted also that for a long time it has done everything in its power to protect the native and to secure for him the benefits of civilization. The missionaries all over the country are the object of special solicitude on the part of the Government, which encourages everything that contributes to the

material and moral uplifting of the savage tribes of the Congo. I may add that for the last twenty years the English missionaries have obtained favors which I myself should not have been able to obtain in the Congo Free State.

"To sum up, inevitable abuses took place in the beginning chiefly at the time Stanley was laying the foundation of the State. The Government does not attempt to deny it. But these abuses disappeared many years ago, and the Government, with a perfectly organized system of justice, constantly endeavors to punish offenses which come to its knowledge. In my opinion the punishment is sometimes even excessive. In some cases white men have undergone severe punishment for a very light correction administered to a disobedient boy or to a thief.

"Let us therefore permit the Congo Free State to go on with its development and to bring to good results the great work undertaken by King Leopold. When I think of the sad plight of the Congo when I first saw it 27 years ago, and then consider the flourishing condition in which I see it today, I cannot refrain from admiring the genius which has so quickly transformed these regions and opened them to commerce and to civilization. The accusations, more or less founded of certain malcontents, should not cause one to forget the gratitude which Africa owes to the Sovereign of the Congo Free State.

"I beg you to accept, sir, the homage of my respectful and devoted sentiments in our Lord.

"(Signed.)

PROSPER AUGOUARD,  
"Bishop of the French Upper Congo."

"P. S. You may give to this letter such publicity as you think proper, in order to establish the truth."

#### VERY REV. BRUNO SCHMITE.

The Very Rev. Bruno Schmite, who has been a missionary in the Congo ten years:

"Ten years' residence on the banks of the Tanganyika have convinced me that, from a humanitarian and civilized point of view, the natives in our regions have nothing to envy from those in the neighboring English and German territories. Quite the contrary.

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"The latter, i. e. the native, is nothing but a vicious and lazy child, who has need of an energetic tutor as much to curb his inhuman vices as to conquer his laziness. I will not go so far as to pretend that the Congo State is so entirely disinterested as to urge the negro



to work merely for the sake of civilizing him, but, whatever her intentions are, they are honest, and, more than that, the steps which she takes are eminently calculated to improve the moral status of the native.

"Besides this, with a broad mind the State encourages, favors and supports all important works which might further this end. And on this same subject we, White Fathers, have nothing to envy in the treatment of the Catholic missionaries elsewhere, and especially of those living in the neighboring German and English colonies.

"Finally, I would that all the negroes of the world could have an Administration such as that possessed by the Congo State in our regions."

### REV. FATHER BEYNEN, OF THE ORDER OF PREMONTRÉ.

Rev. Father Beynen, of the Order of Premontré:

"Having, in the absence of the Very Rev. Apostolic Prefect of Uélé, fulfilled the duties of that high office, from January, 1903, to March of last year, I roamed over it from Ibembo to Sumbari and beyond, I saw every nook and corner of the place, I traveled on foot, in a pirogue, on muleback, over the State highways as well as over the small paths leading to the native villages, where—be it said in passing—I stayed many days and nights and heard the natives fearlessly and openly talking about their interests and I never saw a single act of cruelty committed by any agent of the State.

"All the State agents, more particularly the Belgian officers with whom I had the honor to be acquainted in the Uélé, have shown themselves worthy of our small, but beloved country.

"Like Mgr. Roelens in the territory under his jurisdiction, I found order, peace, security, abundance and joy. No trace whatever of inhuman oppression, or of an unbearable yoke. Nor is the work imposed upon the blacks at all exorbitant."—(*Letter dated Ibembo, Congo, January 11, 1905, to Federation for Defense Belgian Interests Abroad.*)

### LETTER ADDRESSED TO KING LEOPOLD BY THE PRIN- CIPALS OF CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

Letter addressed to King Leopold by the principals of Catholic Missions in the Congo, 1906:

"Sire: By a recent letter addressed to the Secretaries General of the Free State, Your Majesty has deigned to publicly and solemnly acknowledge the importance of the religious mission work in the Congo.



"The national congregations particularly appreciate this proof of high sympathy with which Your Majesty has deigned to honor them. The representatives of the various communities who send missionaries out to the Congo, beg Your Majesty to kindly accept the expression of their warm and deep gratitude.

"It is with a new ardor, Sire, with a new perseverance, of which Your Majesty gives a fine example, that our missionaries will unite their efforts to those of all the devoted agents of Christian civilization for the regeneration of the black race in the Congo.

"Please accept, Sire, the homage of the feelings with which we have the honor to call ourselves the respectful and faithful subjects of Your Majesty.

"(Signed.)

"AD. VAN HECKE,

"Superior General of the Missions of Scheut.

"F. A. DECKERS,

"Prelate of Tongerlo.

"J. DEVOS S. J.,

"Provincial of the Company of Jesus in Belgium.

"A. BROECKOVEN,

"Priest of Westmalle; per the Provincial Father of the Redemptorists.

"R. VERAMME, V. YEANROY,

"Procureur of the Mission of the Stanley Falls.

"BELAUE,

"Superior of the White Fathers."

## OPINIONS OF SOME PROMINENT CHURCH- MEN IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GIBBONS.

His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons:

"It is only some score of discontented men, depending largely on the untrustworthy hearsay evidence of natives, who have raised an outcry against the Congo administration, out of a great band of 500 or 600 missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, who are working on the Congo, and who give thanks to the Congo administration for its support to the missions, and for its successful efforts to introduce Christianity and civilization into Central Africa."—(*Letter dated Baltimore, October 21, 1904.*)

## ADDRESS OF CATHOLICS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Address of Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland to His Majesty, King Leopold, presented February 27, 1904, and signed by two Archbishops, four Bishops, Members of Parliament, etc.:

"They [i. e., Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland] have seen with much satisfaction that many foul and terrible charges, brought forward by malignant and interested persons against Congo officials, have been disproved, both in the Law Courts and by the highest and most reliable testimony; and they, therefore, sympathize with the Congo Administration, whose every action is clearly an object of unprincipled attack by men who pose as honest defenders of the natives, but who are, in reality, fomenters of religious hatred, and are either themselves plotters or the ready tools of schemers who have personal ends to serve by the crusade on which they have entered.

"The revelations just made regarding the disgraceful bribing of a Congo official by the Congo Reform Society's secretary show clearly the methods employed by those pseudo-philanthropists.

"Your memorialists earnestly desire to assure Your Majesty that they will labor to the end that the schemes of these interested calumniators may be entirely overthrown and exposed; and they are satisfied that one way of defeating these plotters is to exercise the most rigid care in the appointment of officials and the closest control over such officials when appointed; and if delinquents are found, to punish them and dispense with their services.

"It is, no doubt, true that cases of wrong-doing are bound to occur, but such cases can in no way obscure the great and noble work for progress and civilization which Belgium has carried out in the region of the Congo, which competent authorities admit is being improved and developed as rapidly as additional means of providing for the welfare of the native races are available.

"Belgium's mission in the Congo region is a high and noble one; and your memorialists are satisfied that Your Majesty thoroughly realizes this. They do not forget that the parties who are now inspiring these attacks on the Congo Administration carefully refrained from interesting themselves in Congo affairs until these had been launched on their present highly-successful career under Your Majesty's supervision. Hence the jealousy and envy that have been incurred by Belgium from those who would now endeavor to deprive her of the fruits of her labor, and would seize for themselves the results of the success which she has achieved.

"The conspirators against the Congo Administration have shown clearly that these are the unworthy and disreputable motives inspiring the many attacks that have been made, and so many of which have been amply discredited."

## VIEWS OF TRAVELERS, EXPLORERS AND OTHERS.

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### LADY STANLEY.

Lady Stanley:

"Sir Henry Stanley believed there was gross and malicious exaggeration of so-called atrocities in the Congo Free State. He believed that many of the stories belonged to the past and were served up again and again; that many regrettable incidents and acts of cruelty were inevitable in so great a territory peopled by uncivilized natives; that evildoers are being brought to justice and punished. Sir Henry moreover was convinced that there was a deep plot against the Congo Free State."

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"Sir Henry thought grand work had been done by Belgians on the Congo."—(*Letter to Monsieur Harry, May 2, 1905.*)

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### ROBERT WILLIAMS, ESQ.

Robert Williams, Esq., of the Tanganyika Concessions, Limited, who has had a long experience in Africa, in the Congo, as well as in British and Portuguese possessions—statement of conditions in the southeastern district of the Congo:

"To the Editor of *The Times*:

"Sir: My attention has been called today to the report in your issue of *The Times* of the 4th inst. of Sir Charles Dilke's speech on Congo affairs, delivered in the House of Commons, and I hasten to refute his statement that the mines of Katanga are worked by slave labor.

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"The Congo State officials have carried out a native policy in Kantanga which has, according to the competent opinions of Messrs. Grey and Holland, been very fair to the natives themselves.

"It is no easy matter to change the habits of a country from slavery and cannibalism and to convert natives from rule by a system of mutilation to habits of peaceful industry, and I consider it says a great deal for the work of the Congo State officials in Katanga when it is considered that they have practically abolished slavery and cannibalism from a district about which the late Dr. Livingstone wrote:

"Slavery is so bad and the sights I have to witness so terrible, and I feel so helpless to prevent it, that I could not go on with my



work were I not buoyed up with the hope that my work may lead others to follow in my footsteps and accomplish what I am powerless to do.'

"The work now being done by our splendid staff of men in Central Africa, in developing the resources of that country and in building a railway to connect it along the, at one time, great slave route to Benguela, with the friendly cooperation of Belgians and Portuguese alike, is, in my opinion, going a long way to fulfil the hopes of the late Dr. Livingstone.

"Yours faithfully,

"ROBERT WILLIAMS,

"Managing Director,

"Tanganyika Concessions (Ltd.)"

## LORD MOUNTMORRES.

Lord Mountmorres on conditions which he found in the northern part of the Congo:

"I can imagine no testimony to the efficiency and the benefit of State rule stronger than the scenes one witnesses almost every day in the Ubangi province. For here we see its effect, not in bringing a feeble people into quiet subjection, but in converting a stalwart, warlike, independent race of savage cannibals into a loyal, contented, and industrious population. Only a few years ago this people was one of the most lawless barriers in the way of white civilization to be encountered in the whole of Africa, and even today the tradition of their cruel savagery is so widespread that you will find that the majority of the very functionaries of the State themselves, who are unacquainted by actual experience with the work which is being done in the Ubangi province, think of the Banza, the Ubangi and the Banziri tribes as being still the most formidable and untameable cannibals. Yet nowadays the visitor to this part of Africa can travel almost anywhere in perfect security, alone and unarmed, on the State side of the river. He will see in the villages a population which is neither cringing on the one hand nor hostile on the other, a population whose virile energy has been diverted from its old-time occupation of war and robbery to the peaceful industries of forging, smelting, agriculture, and textile handicrafts, such as the making and dyeing of native cloth, of nets, rope, string, and the elaborate and ingenious contrivances used by natives in the chase."—(*London "Globe," March 9, 1905.*)



## MR. MARCUS R. P. DORMAN.

Mr. Marcus R. P. Dorman—cases of ill-treatment in the past—exaggerated stories in newspapers—system of government sound and suited to the country:

“The older residents in the Congo admit that there have been cases of ill-treatment of natives in the past, but I am satisfied that the reports which have appeared lately in European newspapers create an entirely erroneous impression of the condition of the country today. The chief officials are undoubtedly anxious to prevent any one treating the natives badly, and any one doing so is severely punished. . . .

“The system of Government, although novel, is undoubtedly sound and suited to the country.”—(*Letter dated Coquilhatville, Congo Free State, August 10, 1904, to London “Times.”*)

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## COLONEL JAMES J. HARRISON.

Colonel James J. Harrison reports (1905) that natives prefer the Government of the Congo to that of Uganda:

“We know how often it has been stated that the native tribes dwelling on the Congo side of the Nile all fled across the river some years ago and built their villages in Uganda, the reasons given being the cruelty and oppression of the Belgian officials. Traveling south from Redjaf to Mahagi I was astonished to find no end of new villages being built and all by natives who formerly had run over to Uganda, but were now returning. Passing Kadge Kadge I met a powerful chief called Tokwe busily employed erecting kraals, saying all his tribe were disgusted with Uganda Government and were coming back.

“When questioning all these people one always got the same reply. ‘We have tried both Governments and like the Belgian one best, so have returned.’ ”—(*Letters to London “Morning Post.”*)

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## SIR ALBERT ROLLIT, M. P.

Sir Albert Rollit, M. P., speech at Liege, September 5, 1905:

“I wish to tell you how much I esteem the enlightened Sovereign who desires Belgium to create outlets for herself by colonization, and who has done all that is humanely possible for a chief of the State to do. I well know that it has been said that the Congo is the scene of atrocities.

"I assure you that the larger proportion of the British nation consider these reports a calumny and that many Englishmen, of whom I am proud to be one, know from trustworthy reports that if there have been abuses, everything has been done to remedy them, and that honor, I may say, is safe.

"There are always difficulties at the beginning of the work of colonization. We had the most evident proof of this in Australia, but I regard as sincere the accounts of the travels of certain of my compatriots, who have stated in a most emphatic manner that the abuses have been repressed and that no atrocity is now committed in the Congo."

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MR. JAMES PIRIE.

Mr. James Pirie, agent of the English Company "Tanganyika Concessions, Limited," writes of his experiences in the Katanga District:

"I have been reading again those extracts from various papers calling attention to the Slavery (?) in this country. What a pity it is that those who so loudly denounce this Government should not pay a visit to the country and see things for themselves, as they really are. It is impossible to imagine a happier race of people than these are whom I have seen since coming under the 'Lone Star' again.

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"Having asked Mwenda what taxes his people pay to Government he says that his people pay no taxes at all, but that he supplies the Lukafu station with sixty baskets of meal per month, besides all the ground nuts, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, beans, etc., they require, for which he receives an annual payment, the householders of his village and the younger men also receiving payment through him.

"He denies that any one of his people have ever been forcibly removed from the village to work since the occupation of the country by the Belgians and states that sixty baskets of meal per month is nothing to them considering the quantity they raise, and that it is in consideration of his being able to regularly supply this amount that he and his people are exempt from any farther taxation.

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"I have just been reading the home newspapers on Katanga, and comparing the actual state of things with what is written there, I cannot understand what it advantages any man to make such a gross misstatement of facts. I have no wish to get into controversy with anyone, but I have not the slightest hesitation in telling you that those who wrote the stories I read are liars and every word of their damnatory utterances on the condition of the natives here, and their treatment by the Belgian Government are malicious lies."

## EDOUARD FOA.

Edouard Foa, the well-known French traveler:

"The Congo State is the finest colonizing work that exists in Africa."

## MUTILATIONS.

Maimed natives found everywhere in Africa—not specially frequent in the Congo—cutting off hands an ancient custom—sometimes done to secure a trophy from dead enemy—like Indian custom of scalping—white men not responsible for such acts.

## CUTTING OFF HANDS A NATIVE CUSTOM.

"Again, Dr. Guinness has exhibited all over the country photographs of living native victims with their hands cut off, a custom he and other missionaries swear to 'as not being a native custom, but one introduced by civilization.' Why, I ask, do they not explain how this same custom comes to be practiced in Khartum, the Sudan, and Uganda?"

"Nor has any answer been given to my suggestion that the natives looked on Consul Casement as a protégé of the missions; there is, no doubt, the Consul's former connection with a Congo mission—his being obliged to conduct much of the inquiry from a mission steamer, besides being accompanied at times by missionaries. These facts alone were bound to weigh with the native mind, however impartial our Consul (whose own honesty and integrity of purpose to get at the truth I have never doubted) might try to make it."—(*Letter from Col. James J. Harrison, London "Times," October 1, 1904.*)

## MUTILATIONS OCCUR ALL OVER AFRICA.

"With regard to the mutilations in the Congo, described by Mr. Casement, I may tell you that only last year in Uganda I saw similar mutilations, which, it is well known, were done by the natives in Uganda, notably on King Mtesa's day. In walking through Toro and Unyoro, I have seen men without noses, ears, and, frequently, without hands."—*Dr. Christy of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (Interview in Liverpool "Echo," June 23, 1904).*



MAIMED NATIVES RARELY FOUND IN CONGO—ONLY TWO  
DISCOVERED IN 4,000-MILE VOYAGE.

"During the ascent of the entire length of the Ubangi River, the descent of the Congo from Stanley Falls to Boma, and the march across Uélé I demanded at the mission stations to see the originals of the photographs of atrocities so common in Europe, but they were not forthcoming. The famous boy Epondo is, however, always on view, for he is employed as a gardener by the Commissaire at Coquilhatville, so that he can be produced at a moment's notice for the inspection of curious visitors.

"One other boy without a hand was shown to me at Ikoko on Lake Tumba. It was supposed to have been cut off by a State soldier nine or ten years ago, but there is no proof of this. These are the only cases which could be found for me during a tour of about four thousand miles in the interior."—(*Marcus R. P. Dorman in letter to London "Morning Post," February 16, 1905.*)

Note.—Epondo referred to by Mr. Dorman is the boy whom the British Consul, relying on native evidence, reported as maimed by a native sentry, but who was afterwards shown to have lost his hand in a boar hunt—one of the many cases in which the accusations against the Congo Government have been shown to be groundless.

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SUCH MUTILATIONS AS EXIST ATTRIBUTABLE TO ANCIENT NATIVE  
CUSTOMS.

"It is needless to enter fully into the state of the country before civilization was attempted, when all the tribes were at war with one another, when the strongest Chief conquered the smaller tribes and murdered and made slaves of them.

"In Bangala you can still see the traces of the former acts of barbarism: children with a mass of cuts all over their bodies, with various members mutilated and such like, and as regards the hand cutting which Dr. Guinness wished to particularly put forward, I will give you an actual illustration of this, which is not an exception but one of many such cases, and a custom which was usual in this part of the world.

"Near Dungu a Sultan called Renzi had three or four sons, one of whom I saw myself, by name Monoko Pamba, and this one not only had his hands cut off, but also his feet, ears, and lips, and from his own brother I heard the story. This was to the effect that his own father had ordered him to cut off all the members of his brother's body owing to a certain interference in his Father's harem which consisted of over 200 females. It used also to be the custom when a great Chief died to bury his slaves with him, after which others



were killed and eaten to show respect to the dead Chief. I now ask who is responsible for the changing of such acts but the Belgian colonists who have at the cost of many lives brought peace amongst the various tribes, and by degrees made such acts of barbarism a thing of the past."—(*Mr. T. Beaumont, who lived two years in the Congo State. Letter in "Standard," October 30, 1904.*)

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#### NO SUCH MUTILATIONS EVER INFLICTED, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, BY A WHITE MAN.

"From the mass of statements, testimony and information gathered by the Commission it appears that the mutilation of dead bodies is an ancient custom which does not have in the eyes of the native the horrible character which it does in ours. The cutting off of certain parts of a dead body fulfils the natives desire to procure a trophy or simply a piece of evidence. The mutilation of fallen enemies frequently occurred in the wars between natives in certain regions. . . .

"One point is beyond doubt; a white man has never inflicted such mutilations, nor caused such mutilations to be inflicted, upon living natives as a punishment for failure to bring in taxes nor for any other cause. Deeds of such a kind have never been stated to us by a single witness, and in spite of all our investigations, we have never been able to discover such a case."—(*Report of the Commission of Inquiry.*)

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### BELGIAN PUBLIC OPINION.

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#### MONSIEUR WOESTE, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

Monsieur Woestè, Member of Parliament:

"I have not denied, and I do not deny, that reforms are useful in the Congo State, that they be even necessary. Neither have I denied, nor do I deny, that regrettable incidents have occurred out there, although it is difficult to conceive how it could be otherwise. But, taking the enterprise as a whole, it must be admitted that it deserves praise and encouragement, not blame and criticism. . . . The work of the Congo will remain, I am convinced, in all impartial eyes, a grand and fine enterprise. Such also will be the judgment of posterity. Whatever may be done, whatever may be said, it will be to the honor of King Leopold II, as it will be to the honor also of all those in Belgium who, considering only the moral and material interests of the native population, have devoted themselves to those

interests, following the King, and have refused to allow themselves to be turned aside by critics."

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#### COUNT DE SMET DE NAEYER.

Count de Smet de Naeyer :

"After the incontestable proof which the Congo Government has given of its wisdom, its foresight and its perseverance in the working of its internal organization, to deny to it the intention, will and energy to bring about reforms which may be necessary is to inflict upon it an outrage against which reason and justice protest."

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#### MONSIEUR NERINCX, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BELGIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monsieur Nerinx, Vice-President of the Belgian House of Representatives, in speaking of Vandervelde's attacks upon the Congo Government :

"I do not in the least agree with Mr. Vandervelde, and I do not think that the large majority of the Belgian people and Belgian Parliament agree with him. King Leopold has accomplished a great work for civilization in the Congo."

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#### BARON WAHIS.

Baron Wahis, on the Socialist attacks :

"It would be a grave mistake to take a few discordant voices as the expression of the general opinion. The cause is well known in Belgium, which makes this insignificant minority speak in a hostile sense of the Congo Government."

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#### MONSIEUR HENRY CARTON DE WIART, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monsieur Henry Carton de Wiart, Member of the House of Representatives :

"The Belgian Socialistic Party has always been anti-Colonial, and is against everything the King undertakes. The Socialists have taken up the anti-Congo campaign for political purposes, but in Belgium the public, including all classes of society, knows what to think about these Socialistic attacks. The majority of the Belgium people are with the King and are devoted to his Colonial work."



